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ABSTRACT

This booklet is targeted to the parents of Hispanic children to encourage them to become part of an education team. The parents' role is to teach and reinforce at home what children learn in the classroom, and to teach the basic values to protect Hispanic traditions and culture. The teachers' role is to teach in the classroom and build on the youngsters basic skills. The role of the children is to absorb and learn, grow and develop. In addition to taking care of children's health and daily life, parents are the first one responsible for teaching children the basic skills before they enter kindergarten. These basic skills include: familiarity with books and the idea of reading; knowledge of the child's own name, parents' names, and home address and telephone number; ability to tell time, to know the days of the week and the months of the year; an understanding of monetary value and use of money; a knowledge of colors and shapes; and the ability to listen, to follow simple instructions, and to reply to questions. The second responsibility of parents is to reinforce learning at home by monitoring homework, taking the children to the library, encouraging reading, and providing opportunities for children to practice reading, writing, discussing and problem-solving. The third parental responsibility is to be actively involved in the school and to communicate frequently with the child's teachers, counselors, and principal. (ALL)

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YOU'RE A PARENT...

YOU'RE A TEACHER TOO



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Join the Education Team

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RC 018101

The Hispanic Policy Development Project

dedicates this book to:

THE PARENTS OF -

FIRST NAME _____ GRADE _____

LAST NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____

TEACHER _____

SCHOOL _____

SCHOOL TELEPHONE NO. _____

OTHER IMPORTANT NOS.

This is me!



Fellow Parents:

Who we are and how we think reflect what we learned from our parents. As children we accepted their authority and did as they told us. As adults we have a tendency to act and think as they act and think; as parents we tend to follow their customs and practices. But their customs and practices may not be enough to prepare our children for the more complicated world in which they will live.

To assure that our Latino children compete fairly with all other children in the schools they attend, it may be necessary for us to build on the strong foundations our parents gave us — adding new practices to the old.

You're a Parent...

You're a Teacher Too

Join the Education Team

Education is the key to our children's future.
Without an education, our children lack opportunities:



- To find good jobs.
- To earn a good salary.
- To fully participate in the activities of their communities.

Today, we are facing a crisis...

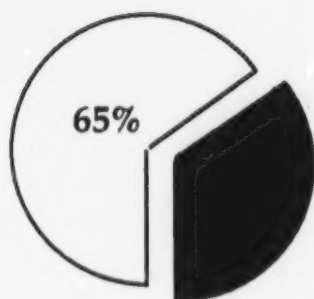


—40% of U.S. Hispanic youth drop out of high school.

And what is even worse...

—25% of the Hispanic youth who do graduate have not acquired sufficient skills to compete and succeed in the world of work today.





This means that....

—65% of our children are going out into the world unprepared.

How can this be happening to our children, when we as parents worry so much about them and about their futures?

What can we do, as our children's first teachers, to make sure that they arrive in kindergarten or first grade with the basic skills that school teachers expect?

After children enter school, what can we do at home to help them do well in their class work?

Should we involve ourselves in the schools our children attend? Why? How?

What is the secret to success in school?

The secret to a child's success in school is that—



—The parents, the teachers, and the children
function as an Education Team.

All members of the team play important roles that contribute to the students' achievement.

- The **parents' role** is to teach and reinforce at home what children learn in the classroom, and to teach our basic values; we must protect our traditions and culture.
- The **teachers' role** is to teach in the classroom and build on the youngsters' basic skills.
- The **childrens' role** is to absorb and learn, grow and develop.

We must join the **EDUCATION TEAM**. Sometimes that means accepting *new tasks* in order to give our children the support they need to become successful students. But joining an **EDUCATION TEAM** may be a new idea for some of us, perhaps because our parents did not participate in an **EDUCATION TEAM**.

They believed that the responsibility for education should be left in the hands of the professionals, the teachers. Most felt that their job was limited to teaching children the basic values of honor, the family, and discipline.

Of course, our parents also understood that—



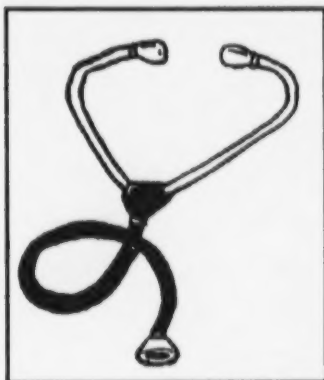
from the time a baby is born—

through its adolescence—



it is the parents who are responsible for that child's physical and mental well being. For example,

It is the responsibility of parents to—



1) Take their children for regular visits to the doctor for checkups. A child requires protection against illness and disease (that is, inoculations, vaccinations, preventive medical care). Some schools will not enroll youngsters in kindergarten or first grade if they have not been vaccinated and inoculated.

2) Take their children to the eye doctor at least once a year. A child who has vision problems may have trouble seeing the blackboard or reading school books; he will struggle with his class work.



3) Take their children to the dentist regularly in order to maintain clean, healthy, strong teeth.

4) Make certain that their children have adequate rest. Children must have a regular set bedtime to assure that they sleep a minimum of ten hours.



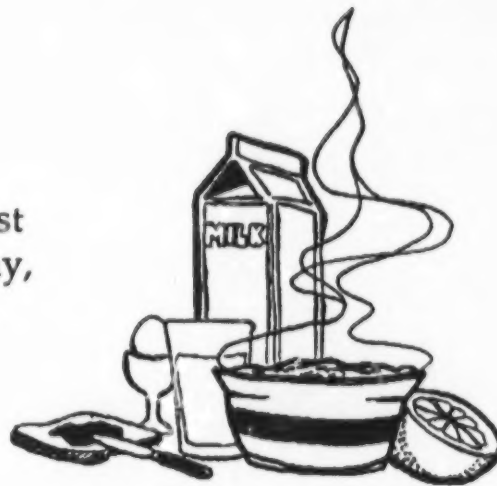
A student who falls asleep in class will not learn the lessons!



And of course,

- 5) Provide their children with a balanced diet.

Breakfast is one of the most important meals of the day, especially for school-age children.



A child who goes to school hungry will pay attention neither to the teacher nor to the day's lessons.

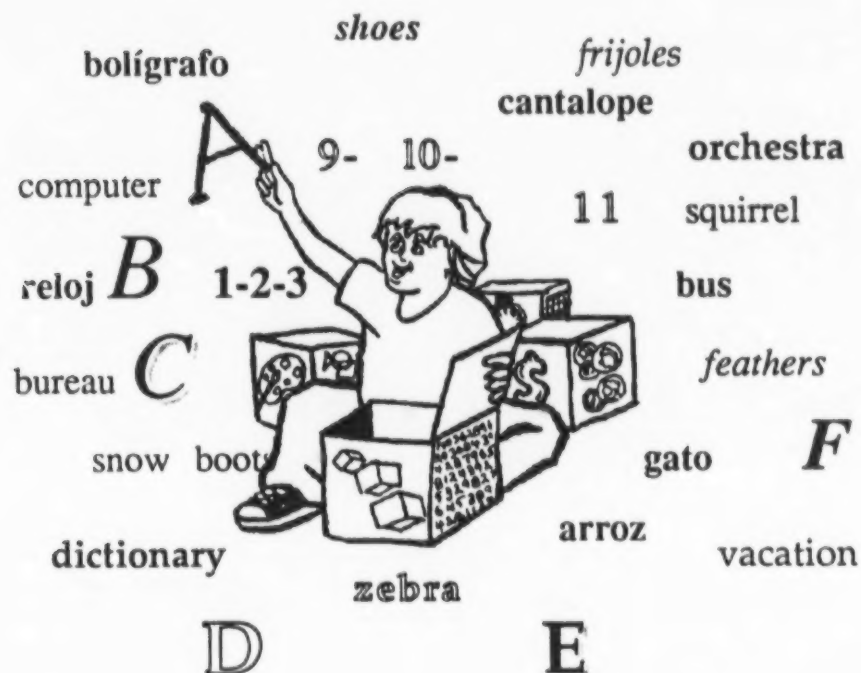
We and our parents have always been accustomed to fulfilling the responsibilities listed above.

But sometimes we do not realize that in addition to being responsible for our children's physical and mental health, we are also responsible for other important things.

I. PARENTS AS FIRST TEACHERS

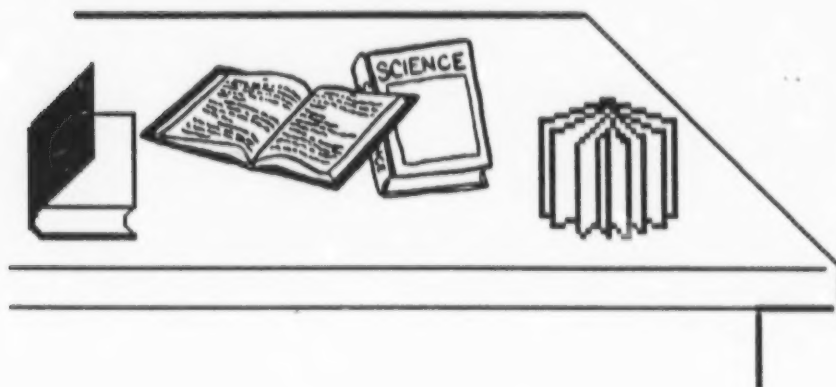
Many Hispanic parents may not be aware that teachers expect children to enter kindergarten or the first grade with *basic skills*. These skills include—

— A wide and varied vocabulary—

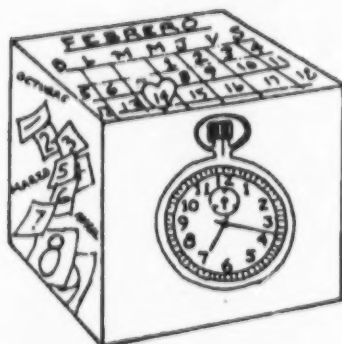


—The ability to recognize and know letters and numbers—

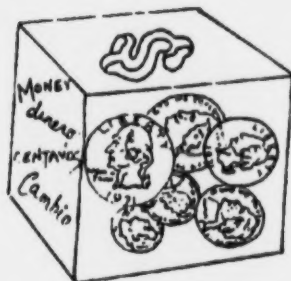
—Familliarity with books and the
idea of reading—



—The child's own name,
parents' name, address, and
telephone number—

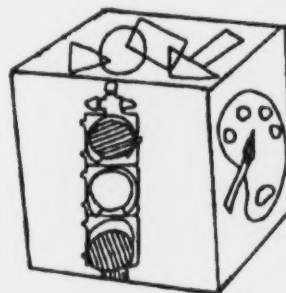


—The ability to tell time, to
know the days of the week
and the months of the year—



—An understanding of the value and use of money—

—A knowledge of colors and shapes—



—The ability to listen, follow simple instructions, and reply to questions—

As first teachers then, we are responsible for teaching our youngsters these basic skills before we send them to school.

How do we achieve all this?

By talking with our children—

Language development begins in the crib. A child learns to talk by listening to people. *Good learners are developed when parents bathe their babies with words.* The repetition of sounds and words that infants hear when parents talk to them awakens their natural ability to understand and speak. *Conversations with babies must be constant.*

—Talk to them—



- When you feed them.



- When you cuddle them.

- When you dress them.

- When you bathe them.

- When you play with them.

When a child starts growing and begins to talk, the conversation between a child and an adult is very important. This is the time when it is vital to talk with children as much as possible, to respond to their questions, and to stimulate and encourage the use of lots of words.



By listening to our children—

Although we *hear* our children when they speak, we don't always *listen* to what they are saying. We should always listen to our children when they want to talk with us or tell us something, and we should try to answer their questions even when we are busy. A child's curiosity and the need to ask questions are essential to the learning process. We must stimulate that curiosity.

By reading to our children so that they—

- Learn to appreciate books.
- Learn the alphabet and the sounds of letters.
- Become aware, in time, that letters form words.

Children acquire new vocabulary by listening to stories—in English or in Spanish—and by looking at the pages of books. They learn to identify objects, and find new ways of saying things and explaining actions.

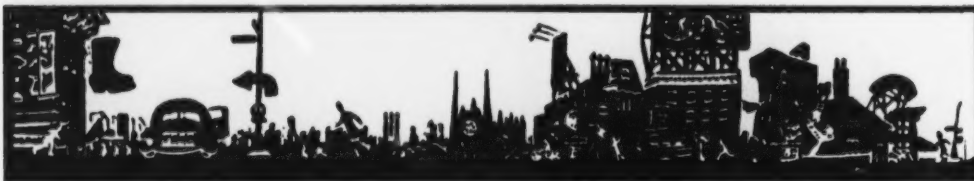
By using our home as a school—



- While we do our housework, we can explain to our children the names and use of things like furniture, windows, clothing; objects found in the kitchen like plates, the refrigerator, the stove; the names of foods like milk, bread, fruits, vegetables.

- We can teach our children to do simple tasks around the house, for example, how to put away their toys, or make their beds.
- While we relax or play we can sing and dance with our children. We can play with them a little while each day.

By using our community as a school—



- We can chat with our children about our neighborhood supermarkets and bodegas, the bank, the mail carrier and others.
- When we go shopping, we can talk to our children about the things we buy.
- When we ride the bus (or the train) we can talk about the bus driver's job, (or the conductor's job), the streets, the stores, the people we see, even the weather.

—But the single most important thing we can do is—

Make sure that our children have self esteem
and self confidence.

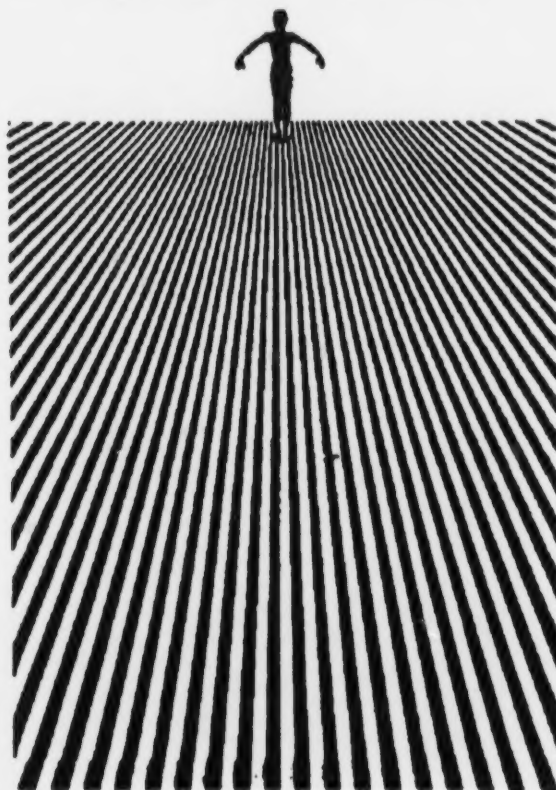
We can communicate with words and actions our love, trust, and support for our children. By always telling them how marvelous, intelligent, handsome or pretty, and even how funny they are—we convey the happiness we feel that they are ours.



—We must make them feel good about themselves and proud of who they are—

In conclusion—

- Youngsters who arrive in school with the basic skills,
- Youngsters who know that the school and their parents work together, and
- Youngsters who know that their parents have an interest and faith in them,



are youngsters who will succeed.

II. PARENTS REINFORCING AT HOME WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CLASSROOM

As parents we do not always realize that after our children enter school we must continue to help them, and that we must establish a direct relationship with the teachers and principal of the schools they attend as soon as they are enrolled—

- because—as our children's first teachers, we must understand the goals and methods of the educational system.
- because—our children's school teachers need to be told about our customs, aspirations, and dreams.
- because—the school teachers are not the only ones responsible for our children's success or failure in school.

The secret to our children's success in school is our involvement in the **EDUCATION SUPPORT TEAM**. As members of this team we assume *new tasks and responsibilities at home* when our children enter school.

For example,

Homework—

Homework is assigned to children so that they can review the lessons that they have studied in class during the day. It is a way of reinforcing what they are learning. For this reason, *it is important that children do their homework.*

When children get home, parents should ask them what they learned in class, and whether they have homework (or reading or studying), and ask them if they need help with it.

Homework should be done as soon as possible after children arrive home, in a quiet place where a child can concentrate.

*Homework—or studying—should not
be done in front of the TV.*

After children finish their homework, it is a good idea to check the work and ask friendly questions relating to the assignment, complimenting them on jobs well done.

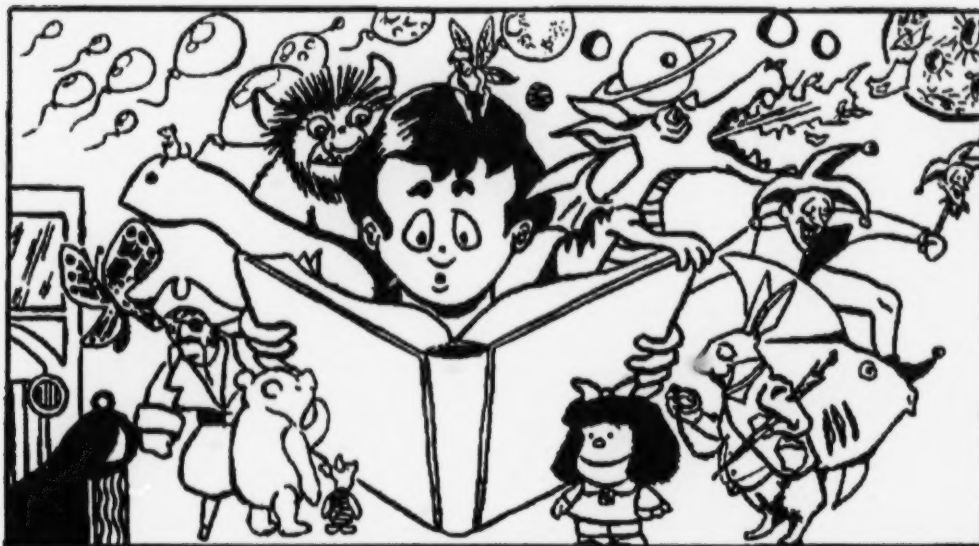
Visits to the library—

It is important that children visit the library on a regular basis. As soon as a child enters first grade, the child should have a library card that allows him or her to borrow books to take home.

Reading—

We should encourage the idea that—

reading is a pleasure



One way parents can do this is by setting aside time every day to read to their children.

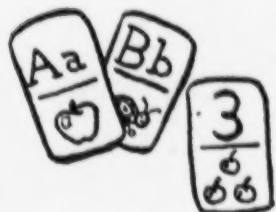
Another way is by example—let your children see you reading something every day (like newspapers, books, magazines). Then as youngsters get older, they will read on their own—for fun—without being asked.



Remember—the more a child reads, the more words he will learn.

Educational activities—

Parents can provide youngsters with additional opportunities to practice reading, writing, discussing, and problem-solving by—



- Playing word games with youngsters.

- Asking children to help write the grocery lists.



- Having conversations with children about their friends, a favorite school subject, a school problem, a school activity.
- Sharing a personal story with youngsters, or telling them how mommy or daddy handled a particular situation or problem.
- Watching educational TV together.

Recreational activities—

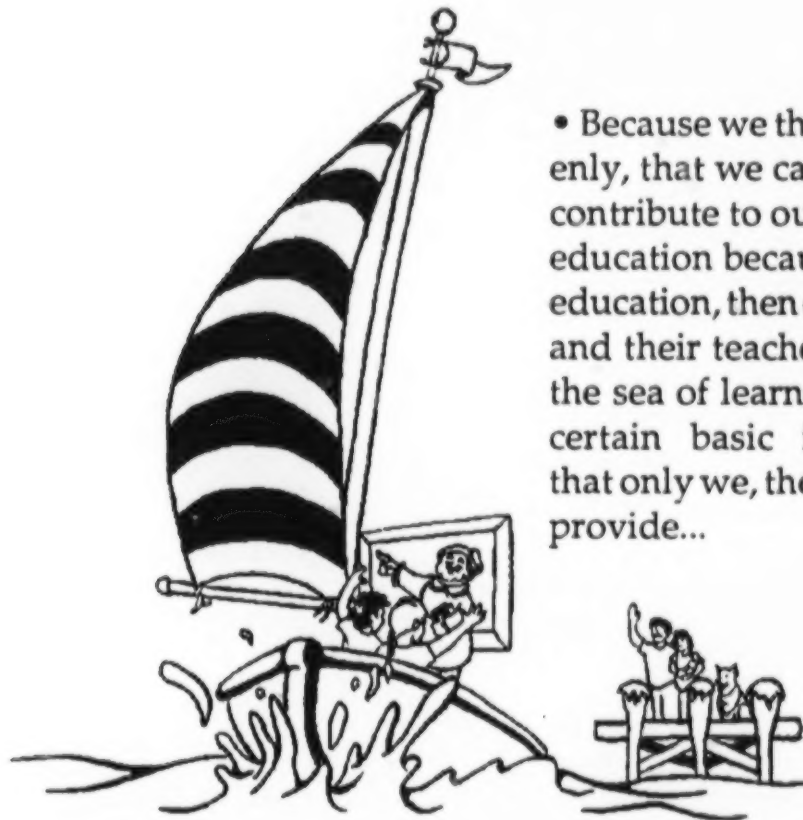
During the weekend parents and children can visit museums, theaters, parks, and the zoo. When the summer months come around, add trips to the beach and picnics. (Other families and children can come along on these outings, too.)

There are also groups like, "Little League," "Girl Scouts," and "Boy Scouts," as well as church and community centers, which provide a variety of recreational activities for children and their parents at little or no cost.

III. PARENTS INVOLVING THEMSELVES IN SCHOOL AFFAIRS —WHY? HOW?

When we stay away from schools—

- Either because we believe that we don't have a role in the education process, or



- Because we think, mistakenly, that we cannot contribute to our children's education because we lack education, then our children and their teachers navigate the sea of learning without certain basic information that only we, the family, can provide...

our absence hurts both the teachers and our own children.

For this reason—

A. We must participate in activities related to our children's progress in school



Although it is true that our jobs and everyday responsibilities take up many hours of our day, whenever possible, we should **participate in the following kinds of activities**, to strengthen our relationship with the school and to show our children that we are interested in their education and that we think that school is very important.

Direct and frequent communication with the teachers

It is very important that parents and teachers talk together frequently in order to discuss a child's progress, problems or special needs. For example—

- Give the teacher your home telephone number and tell her that you want to be kept informed about anything relating to your child.
- Get into the habit of talking with your children's teachers whenever you see them in school, as you pick up or drop off your children.

Attend teacher and parent conferences to discuss the children's academic progress, and school workshops:

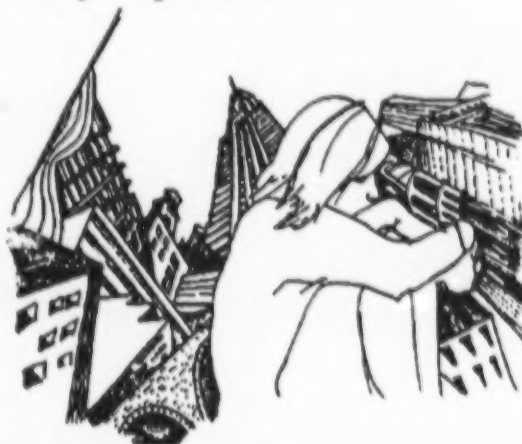
- To learn how to help children at home with math and other subjects.
- To understand the school's rules and regulations.
- To learn how to listen and respond to children.
- To discuss discipline and behavior problems.

Attend special school programs, like holiday programs and graduation ceremonies

Meet regularly with counselors

Meetings with counselors, especially during the junior high and the high school years, are very important.

These are the years when our youth elect the academic courses which will determine what they will be studying.



We must be very careful about the options we and our children consider during these years, because the choices we make will have a profound effect on our children's future opportunities.

B. We must participate in volunteer activities that benefit the school in general

As members of the EDUCATION SUPPORT TEAM it is our responsibility to participate in volunteer activities. There are a variety of activities that require parental assistance. (Naturally, our personal situations influence how and when we can become involved.)

Parents can participate in activities such as:

- Serving as guide or host for newly arrived families.
- Interpreting for non-English speaking parents.
- Helping the teachers in the classrooms.
- Sewing costumes for school plays.
- Helping to paint a classroom, or moving furniture.
- Answering the telephones or filing in the office.
- Supervising the children in the lunch room.
- Preparing meals for school functions.

And, finally we can—

C. We must participate in the school's decision-making mechanisms

Once we know the teachers and the principal, and after we understand and feel comfortable in the school setting, we can work to influence the decisions that affect the operation of the school. For example,

- We can and must vote in school elections. *This is not only our right, it is our obligation.*
- We can become members of the parents/teachers organizations (P.T.A. , P.A.C.).
- We can join campaigns to elect school officials.
- We can become candidates for school office.



Remember—our participation in these decision-making mechanisms and our vote can and will influence the future success of our children.

Fellow Parents—

As families concerned about the future of our children,
we cannot allow **65% of our Hispanic youth, to go out
into the world unprepared.**

To insure the academic success of our children, we must
join the **EDUCATION TEAM.**

Our team participation can fundamentally influence the
future lives of our children. Never forget—

You're a Parent... You're a Teacher Too



Join the Education Team

Respectfully,

Hispanic Policy Development Project
August 1990

Queridos Padres:

Nuestra identidad y la manera en que pensamos reflejan lo que aprendimos de nuestros padres. Como niños aceptamos su autoridad y como adultos nos portamos y pensamos como ellos se portaban y pensaban. Como padres seguimos no solo sus costumbres, pero también su manera de pensar.

Pero quizás las costumbres de nuestros padres no sean suficientes para nuestros hijos e hijas. El mundo está cambiando rápidamente. Por eso hay que asegurar que ellos estén preparados para competir y conseguir empleo estable. Por lo tanto, tenemos que aumentar las prácticas de nuestros padres con prácticas que preparen a nuestros niños y niñas a tener éxito en el siglo 2000.

Uds. Son Padres...

Uds. También Son Maestros

Tomen Parte en el Equipo Escolar

NOTES



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